

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 5441

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PORG, PDEV, SF, WA
SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: FOURIE EMPHASIZES IMPORTANCE OF
SIZE OF U.N. MILITARY CONTINGENT

THE FOLLOWING IS THE TEXT OF A CABLE SENT TODAY, SEPTEMBER 14,
BY THE BRITISH AMBASSADOR:

BEGIN TEXT:

1. IN THE COURSE OF A GENERAL TOUR D'HORIZON WITH FOURIE THIS
MORNING (MY FIRST SINCE HE RETURNED FROM NEW YORK) I RAISED WITH
HIM THE QUESTION OF HOW WE SHOULD NOW PROCEED. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS
THAT THE FIVE WERE FACING WAS EXACTLY HOW TO REGARD THE LATEST
SOUTH AFRICAN APPROACH (UKMIS NEW YORK TELNO 1841). WE RECOGNISED
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THAT THIS WAS IN MODERATE TERMS AND DID NOT FINALLY CLOSE ANY
DOORS, BUT IT WAS DIFFICUTL TO JUDGE WHETHER WE SHOULD NOW PRESS
AHEAD IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL WITH THE ATTENDANT RISK OF THE
SOUTH AFRICANS REJECTING THE RESOLUTION WHICH MIGHT EMERGE.

2. FOURIE SAID THAT HE FACED EXACTLY THE SAM DILEMMA. THE
SOUTH AFRICAN CABINET WERE NOW OBSESSED WITH THE FEAR THAT UNLESS

RAPID ACTION TOOK PLACE TO IMPLEMENT A SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA, A CHAOTIC SITUATION WOULD DEVELOP SUCH AS HAD NOW DEVELOPED IN RHODESIA. ON THE OTHER HAND, AS HE HAD MADE CLEAR TO IVOR RICHARD IN NEW YORK, THE INCLUSION OF AN UNACCEPTABLE NUMBER OF UN FORCES IN THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORT REALLY DID BRING THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO AN IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION. HE SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF NUMBERS HAD BEEN SPECIFICALLY DISCUSSED DURING THE CABINET MEETING IN APRIL AT WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE FIVE'S PROPOSAL. AT THAT MEETING MR. VORSTER HAD SAID: "1,000, GREEN LIGHT. 2,000, YELLOW LIGHT. ANY MORE, RED LIGHT". ALTHOUGH HE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN AN ELEMENT OF OVER-SIMPLIFICATION IN THIS, EVEN 5,000 WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO SWALLOW. BUT 7,500 REALLY WAS OUT OF THE QUESTION. WHAT MADE IT EVEN WORSE WAS THAT THIS NUMBER HAD BEEN JUSTIFIED BY GEN. PHILIPP'S HIGHLY LOGICAL SUPPORTING PAPER.

3. FOURIE WENT ON TO SAY THAT ONE OF THE REAL DIFFICULTIES OF THE PRESENT SITUATION WAS THAT THE CREDIBILITY OF BOTHA AND HIMSELF WAS NOW VERY LOW. HE REALISED ONLY TOO CLEARLY THAT EVEN IF WE GOT OVER THIS HUMP A FURTHER DIFFICULTY WOULD IMMEDIATELY ARISE ON THE QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF UNTAG. EVEN IF BOTHA ASSURED THE CABINET THAT HE WOULD BE CONSULTED ON COMPOSITION, THEY WOULD TAKE THE LINE THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE GENUINE CONSULTATION: HE WOULD BE TOLD IN ADVANCE WHAT COMPOSITION WAS PROPOSED. SEMICOLEON HE MIGHT EVEN HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MODIFYING IT SLIGHTLY, BUT THAT THE UN PLAN WOULD STILL INCLUDE A NUMBER OF TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE CONTINGENTS AMONG THE FRONTLINE BATTALIONS. FOURIE CONCLUDED THEREFORE THAT EVEN IF WE GET OVER THE IMMEDIATE PROBLEM, WE SHALL STILL BE LEFT WITH A VIRTUALLY INSURMOUNTABLE OBSTACLE.

4. LEAVING UNTAG ON ONE SIDE, I ASKED WHETHER THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO ACCEPT THE IDEA OF A SOLEMN DECLARATION ON A CEASEFIRE. FOURIE SAID THAT THE RELEVANT PARAGRAPH IN THEIR MESSAGE TO THE FIVE (PARA 4) HAD BEEN INTENDED TO INDICATE THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE PREPARED TO SIGN SOME DECLARATION, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY IN IDENTICAL TERMS WITH THAT OF SWAPO.. I POINTED OUT THAT THE REFERENCE TO A 48 HOUR DELAY APPEARED TO READ AS AN ULTIMATUM TO SWAPO. FOURIE DENIED THAT THIS WAS THE CASE AND THOUGHT THAT THE WORDS OF A DECLARATION COULD PROBABLY BE WORKED OUT TO THE SATISFACTION OF ALL CONCERNED, THOUGH IT WOULD HAVE TO BE MADE CONTINGENT ON SWAPO'S PARALLEL ACCEPTANCE.

5. ON THE TIMETABLE FOR ELECTIONS, FOURIE WENT BACK OVER THE OLD GROUND, BUT ENDED BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT EVEN THE DTA WOULD PROBABLY NOT WISH TO BREAK THE PROGRESS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

EVEN IF THE PROCESS HAD NOT BY THEN REACHED THE STAGE OF ELECTIONS. BUT HE CLEARLY WAS GOING TO GIVE NO GUARANTEE OF THIS IN ADVANCE. IT REMAINED A VERY IMPORTANT POINT FOR THE SOUTH AFRICANS.

6. MY READING OF ALL THIS IS THAT THE NUMBERS AND COMPOSITION OF UNTAG ARE THE ONLY REAL OUTSTANDING POINTS. BUT THE FACT THAT WALDHEIM INCLUDED A SPECIFIC AND UNACCEPTABLE FIGURE IN HIS REPORT WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THE SAG HAS CLEARLY SERIOUSLY DAMAGED THE CREDIBILITY OF OUR EXERCISE AS A WHOLE.
END TEXT
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